

## TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF FALLING.

◆ **Strength and balance training.** Strength training sessions and balance challenge activities (such as yoga and dancing) will decrease your risk of falls and improve your physical independence.

◆ **Wear supportive shoes** that help maintain your balance when you walk. They should have rubber soles to help prevent slipping. They should have no heels or low heels.

◆ **Remove tripping hazards** in your home. Arrange your rugs and furniture to reduce the risk of tripping and falling. Have good lighting in rooms.

◆ **Have your vision checked.** Poor vision increases your risk of falling.

◆ **Review your medication.** It is important to review all your medications with your pharmacist and your doctor. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you light-headed, which can lead to a fall.

If you have osteoporosis, medications are available. Talk with your physician.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Learning more about how to prevent and treat osteoporosis will help you make good decisions about your health. Several sources of useful information are listed below.

### 2004 Surgeon General's Report of Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What it Means to You

[www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov) or 1-866-718-BONE

### National Institutes of Health Resource Center on Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases

[www.osteoporosis.nih.gov](http://www.osteoporosis.nih.gov) or 1-800-624-BONE

### The National Osteoporosis Foundation

[www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org) or call 202-223-2226

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bonehealth](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bonehealth) or call 770-488-5820



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# OSTEOPOROSIS: "THE SILENT THIEF"

*Learn to protect your bones  
and keep your independence.*



YOUR BONES GET WEAKER  
AS YOU AGE

What is osteoporosis?

All people lose some strength in their bones as they get older. If you lose too much, your bones become weak and thin and can easily break. This is a condition called osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is known as the “silent thief” because people usually have no symptoms until a bone breaks. Osteoporosis is different than arthritis. Arthritis affects the joints and has warning signs.

Any bone can break. The spine, hip and wrist are the most common. A bone can break after a slight fall or without any outside force.

Why is it important to me?

Osteoporosis can affect anyone, but it is more common in women. If you are a woman over age 65, you are at a higher risk for getting osteoporosis. Over half of women who have gone through menopause will develop an osteoporosis-related broken bone.

Breaking a bone can lead you to lose your independence. Broken bones can cause significant pain, disability, and in some cases, even death.

EVERY WOMAN OVER AGE 65 SHOULD  
HAVE HER BONE DENSITY CHECKED

If you are a woman 65 or older, ask your doctor about having a bone mass measurement (also called bone mineral density or BMD test). This test will tell you the condition of your bones. The results of the test can help you and your doctor decide what actions you should take to lower your risk of a broken bone.

**How is a BMD test done?** This test is simple, painless and safe. It only takes a few minutes. You lie on a padded table. A machine scans one or more areas of the bone to measure the strength. The most common test is similar to an x-ray.

**How frequently should I have a BMD test?** Women who are 65 years and older should have a BMD test. Ask your doctor how often you should be tested.

Medicare pays for a BMD test every two years for women who have low estrogen and are at clinical risk for osteoporosis. To get Medicare payment, your doctor must order the test for you.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO KEEP MY  
BONES HEALTHY?

It is never too late to do things that will reduce your risk of a broken bone.

◆ **Get enough calcium (1200 milligrams per day).** If you don’t get this amount in your diet, you may need a supplement

Foods High in Calcium	Calcium (mg)
Milk, 1 cup	300
Low fat yogurt, 8 oz	245 - 415
Salmon, canned with bones, 3 oz	180

◆ **Vitamin D (400 to 600 units every day).** You can get Vitamin D through exposure to the sun and from foods like fortified milk, salmon, tuna and egg yolk.

◆ **Get at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day, even if it’s only 10 minutes at a time.** Activities like walking, gardening and tennis will keep your bones healthy.

◆ **Stop smoking.**

◆ **Drink alcohol only in moderation.** No more than one drink daily.